

**REMARKS**

The Office Action of February 14, 2006, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

At the outset, the undersigned counsel for Applicants would like to express her gratitude to Examiner Roy for the courtesies extended during the interview conducted on July 13, 2006. The above amendments and following remarks are consistent with the discussions during the interview.

In the above Office Action, claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Uchino et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,001,068). *Uchino* discloses, in lines 38-45 of column 3, a guide wire 1 comprising a first wire A located at the distal end of the guide wire and having an appropriate elasticity, a second wire B located at the proximal end of the guide wire and having a flexural rigidity greater than that of said first wire and a tubular connector 12 for joining the first and second wires A, B. The material for the tubular connector 12 is preferably the same or the same kind of metal as that for the first wire A or the second wire B, more preferably the same or the same kind of metal as that for the second wire B. Col. 5, lines 11-17. The connector 12 has a groove (or grooves) or a slit (or slits) or both of them formed in its portion on the distal side of a boundary 124 between the first wire A and the second wire B. Thus, *Uchino* teaches changing the flexural rigidity smoothly from the flexural rigidity of the first wire A to that of the second wire B by using a material having the same rigidity as that of the second wire B and forming slits or grooves in the interval or pitch which becomes smaller toward the end of the tubular connector 12 on the first wire A side and

becomes larger toward the boundary 12 as shown in Figures 1-3 thereof. Col. 5, lines 49-58.

Applicants respectfully submit that the connection 12 of *Uchino* is substantially different from the intermediate portions of claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 of the present invention.

The guide wire of claims 1, 13 and 14 has an intermediate portion provided between said distal end side portion and said proximal end side portion which is formed of a metallic material mixture of said first metallic material and said second metallic material, or which has a portion formed of a metallic material mixture containing said first metallic material and said second metallic material. Similarly, the guide wire of claim 12 has an intermediate portion provided between said distal end side portion and said proximal end side portion and has a portion formed of a metallic material mixture containing said first metallic material. Contrary to the claimed invention which uses a metallic material mixture to obtain the desired change in flexural rigidity, the cited prior art utilizes a connector formed of the same material as one of the end wires and cuts grooves therein to alter the flexibility of the connector. Accordingly, Applicants contend claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 are not anticipated by *Uchino*.

Claim 1 further recites that said intermediate portion comprises a gradient physical property portion in which the content of said first metallic material decreases and the content of said second metallic material increases, from the distal end side toward the proximal end side. The guide wire of claim 12 further comprises a gradient physical property portion in which the content of said first metallic material decreases from the distal end side toward the proximal end side. The guide wire of claim 13 has a portion of said intermediate portion in which the content of said first

metallic material decreases from the distal end side toward the proximal end side and the content of said second metallic material increases from the distal end side toward the proximal end side. The guide wire of claim 14 has an intermediate portion comprising a gradient physical property portion in which the content of said first metallic material decreases from the distal end side toward the proximal end side, and in which the content of said second metallic material increases from the distal end side toward the proximal end side. As *Uchino* does not disclose or suggest the use of metallic mixture material, Applicants further submit that *Uchino* does not disclose the above constructions of claims 1, 12, 13 and 14.

### CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicants regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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